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EDWARD;

OR,

THE CURATE;

A

POEM,

IN THREE CANTOS.

By the Rev. SAMUEL HOOLE, A.M.

K

——— neque enim fortuna querenda
Sola tua eſt, ſimiles aliorum reſpice caſus,
Mitius iſta feres. OVID.

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LONDON

EDWARD;

OR,

THE CURATE.

CANTO I.

I.

ALL is vexation! ſaid the ſapient king,
Vexation all, and vanity and wo!
And yet, does man, that buſy, reſtleſs thing,
Receive the leſſon, and his toils forego?
Ah! deaf to all the ſage and prophet taught,
Still in this darkſome maze he gropes along,
Still ſeeks the wealth or power his fathers ſought,
And opes his greedy ear to Pleaſure's dangerous ſong.

II.

Behold the ſtripling bounding up the hill,
Each ſcene attractive, every object new:
Impatient hopes his ſwelling boſom fill,
As the wide proſpect opens to his view.
Soon on ſome flowery bank his eye he bends,
Or ſtately temple glittering from on high,
While, as he faints, deſire new vigour lends,
And to the choſen ſpot the wanderer ſeems to fly.

III.

But when the choſen ſpot at length he gains,
Its flowers are faded, and its beauty gone;
A brighter object now his eye detains,
Which ſtill, through freſh obſtructions, draws him on.
Thus, hapleſs wretch! as wavering fancy calls,
He ſeeks a charm that flies as he purſues;
Till ſpiritleſs, exhauſted, down he falls,
And ſoon his cloſing eyes the varied landſcape loſe.

IV. O!

IV.

O! when ſhall Wiſdom's voice be heard indeed?
When ſhall weak man his ſolid intereſt own?
When, at the cry of want, ſhall Avarice bleed?
And red Ambition caſt his honours down?
When ſhall the ſhriek of pain, the moan of wo,
Be changed to notes of joy and heavenly lay?—
—When yonder orbs of light ſhall ceaſe to glow,
This mighty globe diſſolve, and all things paſs away.

V.

Till then, O Pilgrim ſad! thy courſe purſue;
Let Patience arm thee, and Religion lead;
Though rough the path, and dreary be the view,
Behold at length the never-failing meed!
Nor think that thou alone expoſed to pain,
Art doomed to tread a ſolitary road;
See multitudes ſuperior ills ſuſtain,
With keener anguiſh groan, and bend with heavier load!

VI.

And thou, whoſe verſe a brother's woes would tell,
With gratitude ſurvey thy better ſtate;
From thy faint heart thoſe reſtleſs thoughts expel,
Which oft have led thee to deplore thy fate:
Thy nerves of ſight, in early youth decayed,
Beyond the power of medicine to reſtore,
Lent to thy willing ſearch a feeble aid,
Juſt ſhewed fair Learning's book, and bade thee read no more.

VII.

What though to narrow, narrow bounds confined,
Thy knowledge ſcarce the ſchool-boys lore outweighs,
While, hating ignorance, thy captive mind
Swells with the thirſt of fame, the love of praiſe;
What though the lone, dull moments ſlowly move,
When loſt in helpleſs indolence you ſit,
Yet can you join the choſen friend you love,
The ſage diſcourſe partake, or gay, colloquial wit.

VIII. What

VIII.

What though, too oft, for thee ſome friendly eye
Muſt trace the page thou rarely canſt peruſe;
What though ſome friendly hand muſt oft ſupply
The pen, obedient to th' inſpiring muſe;
Yet canſt thou view the "human face divine,"
The bluſhing flower, the ſunny landſcape bright;
Of Nature's copious volume all is thine,
Earth and her boundleſs ſtore, and heaven's creative light.

IX.

Then mourn no more—be chearful and be wiſe—
ALL-SEEING PROVIDENCE directs the whole;
Kind when he gives, and kind when he denies,
Friend, Father, Lord of every living ſoul!
By HIS decree the Aſian deſpot reigns
O'er millions waiting the deciſive nod;
Nor leſs the proſtrate ſlave HIS hand ſuſtains—
No ſingle ſparrow falls without the GUARDIAN GOD.

X. Once

X.

Once on a fertile, but ſequeſtered ſpot,
Where Snowden's top divides the labouring cloud,
A veteran raiſed his ſolitary cot,
A welcome refuge from th' obtruding crowd.
Pious he was, though bred to martial rage,
A ſcholar too, though war had been his trade;
For well he ſcanned great Homer's genuine page,
And, *Render good for ill*, his rule of life he made.

XI.

Vigorous and rugged was his outward form,
And Indian ſuns had dyed his viſage red,
Yet was his heart with human kindneſs warm,
At ſight of want or wo his boſom bled.
Soft was his language and his manners bland,
No ſlight offences waked his ſlumbering ire;
But when Oppreſſion raiſed its griping hand,
Pale grew his quivering lip, his eye emitted fire.

XII. When

XII.

When Britain called to honourable war,
His youthful arm her conquering enſign bore;
Oft had he led his hardy troop afar,
O'er many a deſert drear, and ſun-burnt ſhore.
And now, his labours paſt, he loved to tell
How hoſts meet hoſts, and foes with foes engage;
For all the deathful ſcene he knew full well:
His tale was ſometimes long, the venial fault of age.

XIII.

A few paternal acres called him lord,
Theſe, with the ſcanty ſum his country pays
Her worn-out veterans, fed the frugal board,
And kept from penury his latter days.
His ruddy boughs a ſparkling beverage yield;
With foreign juice no laughing goblets ſhine,
Save on the day that won CULLODEN's field,
He mixed the yellow bowl, and quaffed the purple wine.

XIV.

Two children grew beneath his forming care,
The only relicks of his marriage bed;
The ſon intelligent, the daughter fair,
And both to every ſocial duty bred.
Oft would the father view, in EDWARD's face,
The bloom that once had decked his early prime;
In EMMA's form, her mother's ſofter grace
Awaked the tender tear, and called back long-loſt time.

XV.

Scarce eighteen ſuns had rolled o'er EDWARD's head,
Yet ſage inſtruction had matured his mind;
When thus the venerable father ſaid:
"Now let my ſon his ſphere of action find:
"From me but little can my EDWARD gain,
"I never ſought the toys of power or pride:
"The world before thee lies—a ſpacious plain——
"But let a father's voice thy youthful judgment guide.

XVI.

" Ne'er let the dangerous trade of war be ſought,
" Severe the toil, though ſcanty is the meed;
" And now I deem it hard (though once I fought)
" That private men for public wrongs ſhould bleed.
" Nor let thy hand acquire diſhoneſt gain,
" By ſordid traffick and low-cringing art;
" Nor join the ſons of ſtrife at THEMIS' fane,
" To wreſt the doubtful law, and ſcreen the guilty heart.

XVII.

" But rather, as thy gentle ſoul inclines,
" Let all thy ſtudies in religion end;
" Serve at her altars, decorate her ſhrines,
" Her faithful miniſter and zealous friend.
" Slender indeed the means of life ſhe gives
" To modeſt youth unpatronized by power;
" Yet ſafe in humble peace the curate lives,
" No wild ambition fires, no ſchemes of avarice ſour.

XVIII.

" Perhaps thy merits and thy honeſt fame
" (For ever virtuous will my EDWARD prove)
" May win ſome noble and accompliſhed dame,
" Or ſhew thee worthy of a patron's love:
" Yes, ere theſe eyes in long oblivion cloſe,
" They yet may ſee their darling and their pride
" In happy competence and ſweet repoſe,
" The paſtor of a flock, their father and their guide.

XIX.

" Then go, my ſon, to thoſe bright ſpires repair,
" Where Science regiſters her favourite names;
" My little ſubſtance ſhalt thou freely ſhare,
" To gain the lore thy ſacred function claims.
" A friend I have, companion of my youth,
" Who now o'er cloiſtered ſtriplings bears the ſway;
" 'Tis he ſhall lead thee to the paths of truth;
" Go, and be juſt, my ſon, and Heaven ſhall ſmooth thy way."

XX.

The hour arrives—he graſps his father's hand,
Who ſcarce reſtrains the fond, paternal tear.
" Be juſt, my child, be this my ſole command,
" Thy neighbour love, thy bounteous GOD revere."
He claſps his ſiſter in a fond embrace—
" O let my father all thy thoughts engage!
" Supply with duteous love a brother's place—
" Ye guardian powers protect, and bleſs his guiltleſs age!"

XXI.

Behold the youth in academick bowers,
His tutor's favourite and adopted ſon;
In deep reſearch he paſſed his lonely hours,
And many a literary prize he won.
Oft would an idle tribe, the bane and peſt
Of college life, aſſail his peaceful door,
Raiſe the licentious laugh, and impious jeſt,
The frequent bowl demand, and drain his frugal ſtore.

XXII.

At firſt young EDWARD met this rude annoy
With brow indignant and impatient eye;
But when he found their Bacchanalian joy
All fear could maſter, and all ſhame defy,
Patient he ſate amidſt th' intemperate din,
Till at the laſt th' obſtreperous train agree
(Hopeleſs th' intended proſelyte to win)
Some ſtudent new to ſeek—a luckleſs ſtudent he!

XXIII.

Now, by degrees, the ſcientifick page
His mind expanded, and enlarged his views;
Yet Poeſy would oft his thoughts engage,
For from his earlieſt days he loved the muſe.
And ſometimes would he doff his college-trim,
And launch his little bark from ISIS' ſhore,
Swift as a dart the bubbling ſurface ſkim,
Attend the ſwelling ſail, or ply the dropping oar.

XXIV.

Thus paſſed his happy years—in harmleſs play
And vigorous ſtudy—ſport with labour joined.
Oft would the tutor's eye his charge ſurvey,
And ſtill new marks of worth or genius find.
And much he loved him for the father's ſake,
Who once his youthful joys and toils partook,
Together had they ſhared their Chriſtmas cake,
Their weekly ſtipend ſpent, and conned the ſelf-ſame book.

XXV.

At length, in robes pontifical arrayed,
Within their hallowed pale the Prelates ſtand;
On EDWARD's young, but pious head is laid,
With grace endued, the conſecrating hand.
Lo! to his care the ſacred tome conſigned,
From holy lips the ſolemn charge is given,
While, in devotion rapt, his kindling mind
Springs from this lower earth, and wings its way to Heaven!

XXVI. Soon

XXVI.

Soon the grave Preſident's o'er-ruling voice
Preſents our graduate for the vacant ſeat;
Th' elective band approve their ſenior's choice,
And, in due form, their new companion greet.
And now the college jokes, and college wine,
Both old alike, the modeſt youth partakes,
He hears what livings wait the young divine,
And every morn ſome dream of rich preferment breaks.

XXVII.

The pittance that his willing ſire beſtowed,
Could juſt from annual debt the ſtudent clear,
Now, for his due, the burſar's ſtatement ſhowed
A ſum immenſe! full ſixty pounds a year.
He deems his future life exempt from care,
He longs the ſwelling tranſport to impart,
With Emma all his growing hopes to ſhare,
And with a ſon's ſucceſs to glad the father's heart.

XXVIII.

Swift o'er the plains he ſpurs his foaming horſe;
Now diſtant far old SNOWDEN's top he ſpies;
No CAMBRIAN mountain bars his rapid courſe,
Nor food detains, nor ſlumber ſeals his eyes;
Till in the tranquil vale that gave him birth,
He views the dear, the hoſpitable cot;
He bounds impatient on the well-known earth,
And wets with tears of joy the conſecrated ſpot.

XXIX.

But ah! extended on the bed of death,
Behold the venerable ſoldier lie!
Benumbing palſy checked his labouring breath,
Shrunk his ſtiff arm, and fixed his hollow eye.
"My ſon, my ſon!"—no more his lips could ſay—
His cold, cold tongue eternal ſilence tied,
He ſtrove to point where fainting EMMA lay,
Then preſſed his EDWARD's hand, ſerenely ſmiled, and died.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO

CANTO II.

I.

FULL many a day in bitterneſs of ſoul,
Such as ne'er bows to earth the wealth-ſwoln heir,
To thick, black woods the pious EDWARD ſtole,
And breathed his anguiſh in the darkened air;
Yet oft in EMMA's ſight a ſmile he wore,
And bade his voice aſſume a chearful tone,
The kind deceit revealed his pangs the more,
She marked his ſtarting tear and heard his ſtifled groan.

II. The

II.

The youthful rector of the neighbouring vill,
Whose shapeless spire arose their cottage near,
Was oft their solitary guest, and still
When EMMA wept, he dropped a kindred tear.
Full twenty moons had now increased and wained,
Since here he came the word of truth to preach:
His blameless life the soldier's praise had gained;
"Who lives so well," said he, "is ever fit to teach."

III.

Gentle he was, but no proud patron's slave,
Though at his birth some favouring planet smiled,
For this fair benefice his prelate gave,
Ere yet, at churches three, six years he toiled.
Now in soft ease his moments passed away,
His cultured glebe the daily board supplied,
Fruit bowed his trees, and every quarter-day
His willing parish paid ten sterling pounds beside.

IV.

Her brother firſt obſerved the rector's eye
Peruſe the features of th' unguarded maid,
He ſaw her boſom heave th' unconſcious ſigh,
And her pale cheek in tranſient bloom arrayed:
Their growing love he wiſhed not to control:
Where may ſhe find a more deſerving mate?
Though mean his fortune, nobler was his ſoul
Than oft is found, I gueſs, among th' imperious great.

V.

At length young EDWARD preſſed his EMMA's hand,
And poured theſe accents in her gentle ear;
" I go, once more, to join th' aſſociate band,
" I go and leave a friendleſs orphan here.
" Sweet ſiſter! all that fate has left me now!
" 'Midſt theſe lone wilds ſhall timid beauty ſtray?
" Say, canſt thou dwell beneath this mountain's brow,
" No ſire to guard thy youth, thy brother far away?

VI. " How

VI.

" How wilt thou paſs thy ſolitary days?
" What kindneſs ſhall ſupply fraternal love?—
" That ſudden bluſh, dear maid, thy heart betrays,
" I ſee thy paſſion, and thy choice approve.
" Yes—virtuous HENRY ſhall thy hand obtain,
" (Thy hand, a brighter prize than courts afford)
" Shall guard from every ill and every pain,
" Each tender name unite—thy father, brother, lord."

VII.

He joins their hands, their ruſtick feaſt partakes,
Then mounts his ſteed, and kindly bids adieu.
" This poor retreat," he cries, " theſe dimpled lakes,
" And graſſy meadows, I reſign to you.
" Take them, my brother, 'tis thy EMMA's dower,
" A tribute which her merits claim from me,
" An ample revenue yon claſſic bower
" Gives to my little wants—the reſt is due to thee."

VIII.

Our EDWARD now the ſeats of learning ſought,
Where on ſwift wing the ſtudious moments fly;
Yet, when his mind his father's image caught,
The tear of recollection filled his eye.
Three circling years elapſed, when weary grown
Of college talk, and groves and cloiſters dim,
He longs to ſee, what books had only ſhown,
The works and ways of men—ſtrange ways, unknown to him!

IX.

But firſt to CAMBRIA's hills he ſpeeds his flight,—
Soon in his arms he folds the beauteous dame;
Her HENRY too.—He hears with new delight
An infant EDWARD liſp his uncle's name.
Day follows day, the rapid months ſucceed,
Yet ſtill, by magick held, he lingers here.
At length he breaks away.—Slow moves his ſteed—
She waves her leſſening hand, and drops a parting tear.

X. Amidſt

X.

Amidſt the proud metropolis behold
The modeſt ſtudent loſt in wild amaze,
On ſtately domes, and chariots bright with gold,
And powdered ſlaves, at firſt he wont to gaze.
What reſtleſs multitudes in every ſtreet!
Yet none before had ever met his view;
Oft he expects ſome college friend to greet,
But every face was ſtrange, and every object new.

XI.

Uncertain, and perplexed he roams along,
Then of the crowd he ſeeks the doubtful way,
Quick from the heedleſs youth, the thieviſh throng
The little oracle of time convey.
But ah! his tender breaſt with pity bleeds
When forth in troops the wretched females go,
With aching hearts, though clad in gaudy weeds,
To want and ſhame expoſed, and drunkenneſs and wo!

XII. Juſt

XII.

Juſt ere his tutor dies, the good man's care
Wins for his favourite charge a curate's place;
With gown and caſſock new, and powdered hair,
Behold him now a city pulpit grace!
Mild were his looks, perſuaſive was his tone,
His thoughts benevolent, his language ſtrong,
The audience, on a ſudden wakeful grown,
Hang on their preacher's lips, nor think his ſermon long.

XIII.

Yet ſome there were—alas! miſtaken men!
Who deemed their paſtor's doctrine ſcarcely ſound;
For thundering threats ne'er dignified his pen,
Nor did his falling arm the cuſhion wound.
They joyed to hear the rough voice roaring loud,
The foaming tongue and flaming eye admired;
Perdition dealt among the groaning crowd,
And all th' enthuſiaſt rant, their ſenſeleſs ears required.

XIV.

His maxim, "Charity is all in all,"
They almoſt thought it hereſy to hear;
Their weak, unmeaning cant of GRACE and CALL,
Would oft at pariſh-meetings vex his ear.
But ſtill the better ſort, from folly free,
Watched every word, and every word approved;
They ſaw his doctrine with his life agree,
The precept they revered, the fair example loved.

XV.

Meanwhile, at idle hours, with ardent gaze,
His eye the page of chivalry devours,
Oft o'er wild heaths with armed knight he ſtrays,
Or talks with beauteous dames in myrtle bowers.
But more on MILTON's bold, majeſtick ſtrains,
And POPE's harmonious verſe he loves to dwell,
Ne yet DAN SPENSER's fairy ſong diſdains,
Though quaint the phraſe, I ween, it pleaſed him paſſing well.

XVI.

Sometimes, allured by SHAKSPEARE's mighty muſe,
SHAKSPEARE, the joy and pride of every age!
The mimic ſplendour of the ſtage he views,
Where, every ſenſe, the magick ſcenes engage.
See! midnight ghoſts the regal tent infeſt!
See! LEAR, old LEAR, expelled his children's door!—
Grief, pity, terror, harrow up the breaſt—
For GARRICK then inſpired——but GARRICK is no more!

XVII.

And muſick too (for ah! his gentle ſoul
Was all unmeet for "ſtratagems and ſpoils")
Muſick he loved, and felt that ſweet control
Which ſorrow diſſipates, and pain beguiles:
Thoſe ſpeaking chords, which Heaven-taught HANDEL ſtrung,
His ear enchant, his kindling mind inſpire:
In mute delight on ACIS' notes he hung,
MESSIAH's lofty ſtrains wrapt all his ſoul in fire.

XVIII. Once,

XVIII.

Once, by the ſons of ſong and faſhion led,
He ſeeks the dome in modern times renowned,
On Engliſh boards where foreign heroes tread,
And vulgar ears with foreign accents wound:
From Grecian lips he hears the liquid note,
Old NESTOR pours the modulated ſtrain,
PELIDES rages through an eunuch's throat—
Theſe wonders once he heard—nor ſought to hear again.

XIX.

The buzz of crowds, the great man's falſe careſs,
The rude intruſion of the pert and vain,
And all the gay impertinence of dreſs,
Oppreſſed and wearied quite our college-ſwain.
To him, unpoliſhed elf! more noble ſeemed
The rough, blunt hind, than Faſhion's fawning crew;
And artleſs village maid more fair he deemed,
Than dame of high degree, perfumed and painted too.

XX.

The youth a young collegiate chanced to meet,
Who held by Severn's ſide his little cure;
He boaſts the beauties of his calm retreat,
His woodbine walks, ſmooth hills, and rivers pure.
Both ſigh for change, and both are ſoon agreed;
The village prieſt in wealthy town remains;
And ſee, unfaſhionable Edward ſpeed,
From noiſe and gaping crowds, to ſolitary plains.

XXI.

How ſweet the breeze, how freſh the vallies felt,
The hills how noble, and the ſkies how bright,
To him, who long in narrow lane had dwelt,
Where walls of dirty brick exclude the light!
On every ſide our trav'ller caſts his view,
And as he diſtant leaves the buſtling throng,
More playful-wild his riſing ſpirits grew,
And, all-unconſcious, oft break out in merry ſong.

XXII. Low

XXII.

Low in a vale the warm, dry manſion ſtood,
A glaſſy lake its front reflected ſhows;
The eaſt was ſkirted by a neighbouring wood,
While on the north a pine-clad hill aroſe.
The little garden, ſloping to the ſun,
Bears many a flowery ſhrub, and fruit tree gay,
And winding walks through groves of laurel run,
To chear the weary eye on dull, brown winter day.

XXIII.

Delighted with the ſpot, young EDWARD roves
O'er the ſmooth mead, and through the tangled dell,
Explores the center of the thickeſt groves,
And ſoon each half-trod path he knows full well.
And now his ſteps purſue the little rill
That feeds his lake, the ſpacious vale acroſs,
When lo! the ſtream comes foaming down the hill,
O'er black, oppoſing rock, and fragments brown with moſs.

XXIV.

Oft would he tread the ſhades abſorbed in thought,
Or woo, in glen obſcure, the favouring muſe;
Whene'er his mind the glowing image caught,
His feet would ſtill the beaten path-way loſe.
The ſounding lay he now repeats aloud,
Now on the bank in penſive ſilence ſits;
The wondering peaſant, all-unheeded, bow'd—
"Our curate ſure," quoth he, "poor man! hath loſt his wits."

XXV.

Yet not again, unknowing and unknown,
In conſtant ſolitude did EDWARD range;
With men and manners more familiar grown,
He loved ſociety, and wiſhed for change.
Sometimes with wealthy farmer would he talk
Of grain, and furrowed field, and paſture wide;
And now and then with brother curate walk
To where the neighbouring town their little wants ſupplied.

XXVI. His

XXVI.

His ſocial days and ſocial nights he ſhared
With vicar learn'd, or portly yeoman near;
But chief the ſquire (whoſe fathers had prepared
For many a grave divine the weekly cheer)
Gives courteous welcome to his curate young,
And oft invites to hear the vocal lay,
Or mellow harp by blooming beauty ſtrung,
Till EDWARD's melting ſoul in pleaſure dies away.

XXVII.

Right proud and wealthy was this rural lord,
Stern was his brow, commanding was his eye,
Profuſe his table, for the groaning board
Could half the village train with food ſupply.
Harſh was his temper, yet he knew full well,
That outward poliſh courts and camps beſtow;
His fixed reſentments nothing could diſpel,
A ſteady friend he was, but unforgiving foe.

XXVIII. The

XXVIII.

The ſon, a rude, uncultivated boor,
Of form ungraceful, and of ſordid ſoul,
No pleaſure knew, but when, on reedy moor
He ſprung the game, or drained th' intemperate bowl.
But CAROLINE is all her father's care,
O! worthy ſhe of care, and love, and praiſe!
Her heart is gentle, and her face ſo fair
That ſenſeleſs clods look up, and wonder while they gaze.

XXIX.

But though no ſoil a lovelier flower diſcloſe,
Nor courts exhibit more attractive grace,
Yet CAROLINE ſuperior beauty knows,
Her mind is ſtill more faultleſs than her face.
Celeſtial mind! caſt in celeſtial mould!
Such vigorous ſenſe, by elegance refined,
Such dove-like meekneſs, with ſuch virtue bold,
But rarely meet, I fear, in man or woman kind.

XXX.

Oft does young EDWARD's ear drink in the lay,
The heavenly lay this breathing cherub ſings;
Her bower he haunts the livelong ſummer day,
While, with her harp, the liſtening valley rings.
And oft on winter evening will he ſit
In converſe ſweet beſide the ſocial fire,
Partake the banquet rare of genuine wit,
While gentleneſs and joy her honied lips inſpire.

XXXI.

Thus, with deſtructive voice, the Syrens ſung—
But ah! this guileleſs lady means not ſo!—
Yet hear no more, fond youth! th' enchanting tongue,
To thee it threatens bitterneſs and wo!—
But ſay, couldſt thou, ſevere declaimer! ſay
Couldſt thou the dear, though fatal pleaſure fly?
From melody celeſtial turn away,
And cloſe, to bloom divine, thy philoſophick eye?

XXXII.

The maid, all innocent, his converſe ſought,
And what her ear received her mind retained;
The lore of ſcience from his lips ſhe caught,
Till on her heart Love's ſweet infection gained.
Oft from her boſom ſtole th' unbidden ſigh,
Her cheek grew warm when EDWARD met her view,
And now at village church, ſhe knew not why,
Though ſtill attentive there, ſhe more attentive grew.

XXXIII.

Thus unperceived both fed the young deſire,
Till the ſtrong paſſion laughed at all control;
In her, though bright, yet gentle was the fire,
But EDWARD's mightier flame conſumed his ſoul.
O thou! who wealth or fame haſt made thy choice,
Watch the firſt, faint attack of mining love,
That moment fly, when once the melting voice
Or radiant eye begins thy changing pulſe to move.

XXXIV. Why

XXXIV.

Why ſhould I tell, what many a tale can ſhow?—
The weak reſolve, forgot as ſoon as made,
The thrilling tranſport, and the burning wo,
Which now by turns their days and nights invade,
Why ſhould I tell? for who has never loved?—
Each vowed from each to hide the ſtifled flame;
But ſoon, alas! by ſudden impulſe moved,
What long their eyes had ſhewn, their mutual lips proclaim.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

CANTO III.

I.

WHERE the wide park its circling pale extends,
Far from the manſion's venerable wall,
A dark, rough hill with ſudden ſwell aſcends,
O'er-hung with ſpreading fir, and beeches tall.
Its ſouthern ſide a richer gloom ſupplies,
Grove meeting grove, and ſhade imbrowning ſhade;
Where hid from gariſh day a cavern lies,
Which from the hollow mount the hand of art had made.

II.

On the ſmooth floor, bedecked with pebbly ſtone
Of many a hue, a little altar ſtands,
Here clothed with moſs, with ivy there o'er-grown;
Above, a ſculptured ſaint extends its hands.
An inner room the matted couch reveals,
The rude walls many a holy croſs diſplay;
While through the dim, arch'd window, faintly ſteals,
Once ſtained with forms uncouth, the many-coloured ray.

III.

Here, as tradition tells, in days of yore,
When moody Superſtition dropped her beads,
(O! happy land where now ſhe rules no more!)
A wanderer came, arrayed in pilgrim weeds:
With travel ſpent, delighted with the gloom,
For gloom congenial wrapt his cloudy mind,
He ſhaped this rugged cave, his living tomb,
To ſocial pleaſure loſt, and uſeleſs to mankind!

IV.

When burning noon-day glares upon the lawn,
Amidſt the ſhelter of theſe lonely groves,
From every eye, from every ear withdrawn,
The lovely CAROLINE with EDWARD roves.
Oft would they ſtop to hear the ring-dove's moan,
Sweet ſound! to lover's ears a ſtrain divine!
Or mark the torrent, from the rude cliff thrown,
Winding its frothy way through woods of darkſome pine.

V.

One fatal eve, what time the night's pale queen
Sheds from her riſing orb a feeble ray,
Won by the ſtillneſs of the ſylvan ſcene,
But more by love ſeduced, too long they ſtray:
The moſſy cell their weary ſtep invites,
The ruſhy couch a homely ſeat ſupplies.
O! ſee the day deſerts yon weſtern heights!
Ah! inconſiderate pair!—but when were lovers wiſe?

VI.

Meanwhile her ſire an annual feaſt partakes,
Where ſmoke the paſty rich, and haunch divine!
But now the roaring table he forſakes,
Oppreſſed with noiſe, and politicks, and wine.
For ſoon returned, from room to room he hies,
Then ſeeks his daughter of the menial train;
Swift at the word each ready vaſſal flies,
Through walks and arbours green—but all their ſearch is vain.

VII.

Now firſt his mind the dark ſuſpicion caught,
Sudden he ſtalks along from ſhade to ſhade;
At length ſome demon to the covert brought,
Which hid the virtuous youth and gentle maid.
Here, hand in hand, inſenſible of time,
They ſate—her ſoft notes floating through the grove:
The ſire, ſcarce breathing, marks the warbled rhyme—
He hears young EDWARD's voice—he hears the voice of love.

VIII. "Baſe,

VIII.

" Baſe, worthleſs girl!" the cavern's hollow ſide
Reverberates the ſound—aghaſt they ſtart—
" Glows in thy breaſt no ſpark of generous pride?
" Is ſhame, is honour baniſhed from thy heart?—
" —And thou, deceiver! mercenary ſlave!
" Practiſed in guile, and ſkilful to enſnare!
" Not thoſe falſe charms allure—my wealth you crave;
" But know, a father's hate is all the wretch ſhall ſhare."

IX.

" No dark deceiver I," the youth rejoined,
" Pure is my love, and mutual is the flame;
" Thy wealth attracts not me—know, EDWARD's mind
" (Whate'er his ſtate) diſdains the ſordid aim."——
" —Parley with thee, ſeducer, I deteſt"——
" This hireling prieſt may plead ambition's fire;
" But O thou grovelling girl! thy harlot breaſt
" No paſſion could inflame, but lawleſs, low deſire!"

X. " Ah!

X.

" Ah! when," with faltering voice replies the maid,
" When have I merited a wanton's name?
" Can virtuous love the nobleſt rank degrade,
" Or tinge the modeſt cheek with guilty ſhame?
" Have not thy lips on EDWARD's merit dwelt,
" His generous heart, and cultivated mind?
" Then muſt the daughter bluſh, whoſe ſoul has felt
" The power of native worth by wiſdom's gifts refined?"

XI.

" Dareſt thou avow"—exclaims the furious ſire—
" But hear, degenerate wretch! and trembling hear!—
" Reſolve no more to feed th' ignoble fire,
" Or for a father's curſe prepare thine ear.—
" For ever from this needy prieſt to part,
" This moment ſwear—or by th' Eternal Power!
" You here reſign my houſe, my wealth, my heart—
" And now be his or mine from this deciſive hour."

XII.

" O caſt me not away! Behold thy child,
" Thus proſtrate in the duſt, embrace thy knees!
" Whoſe fond endearments once thy pains beguiled,
" Whoſe every word, whoſe every look could pleaſe.
" Still, ſtill, to watch thy age with filial care,
" The ſweet, the darling privilege allow—
" Ah! let me ſtill thy joys, thy ſorrows ſhare,
" And live for thee alone.—But ſpare that cruel vow!"

XIII.

" O ſerpent! doſt thou hope to blind again
" The doting fool deceived too long by thee?—
" No, to the proof—thy arts, thy prayers are vain—
" Renounce thy low-born paramour, or me!—
" Ha! doſt thou pauſe?—Then take a father's hate—
" From this curſed day I ſpurn thee from my door—
" Off!—cling not to me thus—'tis now too late,—
" Thy penitence were vain—I know thy face no more."—

XIV. " Then

XIV.

" Then, EDWARD, hear a poor, deſerted maid,—
" When this ſtern man a father's name confeſſed,
" My fond, fond ſoul a prompt obedience paid;
" But now no love paternal warms his breaſt!
" Then take my hand—(my heart's already thine)
" GOD, Nature, and my Country made it free;——
" The pride of wealth I chearfully reſign,
" And welcome ſcorn, reproach, and poverty with thee."

XV.

Have you not ſeen the midnight flames ariſe,
Burſt the ſtrong walls and to the ſkies aſpire?
So raged the father—from his ſtarting eyes
Ungoverned fury darts her keeneſt fire.
" RECORDING GOD! my bittereſt curſe enroll!
" May thy red lightnings ſinge my aged head!
" May pains eternal faſten on my ſoul,
" Whene'er this pitying hand ſupplies their daily bread!"

XVI.

He ſaid, and foaming haſtens from the grove—
When thus the youth—" Look up, my CAROLINE!
" You loſe, ſweet maid, a father's ſelfiſh love,
" But EDWARD and his little all are thine.
" What though the ſumptuous board you grace no more,
" Quit the gay chariot and illumined hall,
" To ſhare a needy curate's ſcanty ſtore,
" Yet love and peace are ours, and theſe are all in all."

XVII.

Fond youth!—has love ſuch all-ſupplying power?
Alas! when Competence her gifts denies,
When Poverty creeps on with aſpect ſour,
Love gnaws the heart, and Peace affrighted flies.
Sweet Love! I hail thee, balm of human wo,
Parent of young delight, beſt gift of Heaven!
But rather let me ne'er thy tranſports know,
Than ſee a darling bride to want and ſorrow driven.

XVIII.

Swift for a while the joyous moments flew,
No disappointments sting, no discords wound;
Each day more fond th' enamoured husband grew,
Each hour new graces in her lord she found.
Fly back, ye hours! ye happy days, return!
At least, O Time! thy rapid wing restrain!
For why so soon should worth and beauty mourn?
But cease, unthinking bard, for man is born to pain.

XIX.

Scarce on their growing loves twelve moons had smiled,
When sleep eternal seals her father's eyes;
With his last breath the wretch disowns his child,
And all his wealth the son's excess supplies.
Yet CAROLINE, abandoned and denied,
With many a filial tear bedews his tomb,
While the base heir throws all his portals wide,
And bids th' intemperate roar loud echo through the dome.

XX.

Soon EDWARD's ſcanty means grew ſcantier ſtill,
His cure ſupplies but food and coarſe array;
No more the college rents his coffers fill,
And all his little hoard melts faſt away.
Two blooming infants graced the nuptial bed,
The mother's tranſport, and the father's pride;
Yet oft he claſped the babes, and ſighing ſaid,
"How ſhall your wretched ſire for all your wants provide!"

XXI.

O miſerable man! from day to day
What pangs thy ſlow-conſuming heart muſt know,
To ſee that tender frame the patient prey
Of ſervile toil, and penury, and wo!
She, who ſo late beheld a numerous band,
Each wiſh preventing with officious care,
A houſehold drudge become! with ſlaviſh hand
The nightly bed to dreſs, the daily meal prepare!

XXII. "Why

XXII.

" Why droops my EDWARD?" thus ſhe oft would cry,
" Theſe hands can labour, and delight in toil;
" No taſk is irkſome when my lord is by,
" No grief depreſſes if my EDWARD ſmile."—
—" O my loſt CAROLINE! my ruined wife!
" By me, accurſed wretch! to miſery driven!
" How can I ſee thee drag this abject life,
" Smile midſt the horrid ſcene, yet hope to be forgiven?"

XXIII.

" Not ſo, my love," ſhe cried, " my choice was free,
" Nor would I now for worlds that choice forego,
" 'Tis peace, 'tis happineſs to dwell with thee,
" Midſt every evil that the wretched know."
Thus would ſhe ſtrive—but ah! ſhe ſtrove in vain,
To heal the wound that feſtered in his ſoul;
His love, his fortitude could ſcarce reſtrain
The ſtill returning ſigh, the bitter tear control.

XXIV. Meantime

XXIV.

Meantime her little ſtrength the fair forſook,
Yet ſtill her mind its wonted vigour knew;
Faint was her voice, and meager was her look,
While her fluſhed cheek retained a crimſon hue.
Now EDWARD's pen (his ſhame, his pride ſubdued)
Too late implored his EMMA's generous aid;
Too late—for ah! each day, each hour he viewed
The hectick fire ſteal on, and every pulſe invade.

XXV.

That mighty grief which burſts the ſwelling heart,
Fatal, though ſlow, upon his ſpirit preys;
He hangs deſpairing o'er his dearer part—
When EMMA comes expiring hope to raiſe.
"Take back," ſhe ſaid, "what once you nobly gave,
"Our fruitful glebe will all our wants ſupply."
"Ah me!" he faintly cried, "no wealth can ſave—
"The rapid plague devours—my CAROLINE muſt die."

XXVI. "No

XXVI.

" No, EDWARD, no—if aught has power to heal,
" If tenderneſs can ſooth, and art reſtore,
" Soon ſhall thy bride returning vigour feel,
" And all this weight of anguiſh be no more.
" By day, by night, the languid couch I'll guard,
" Watch every look, alleviate every pain,
" And pitying Heaven ſhall all our cares reward."—
Alas! the doom is ſealed, and human aid is vain!

XXVII.

How ſhall the Muſe the tragick ſcene recite?
Let fancy paint what words can never ſpeak.—
See EDWARD now a withered, ſhapeleſs ſprite,
Crawl to his love, and bathe her dying cheek!—
Hear her laſt, faltering breath her huſband bleſs!
See the laſt pang diſtorting all her charms!
O! ſee her, gaſping, feebly ſtrive to preſs
Her little helpleſs babes, and die in EDWARD's arms!

XXVIII. Diſeaſe

XXVIII.

Diſeaſe ſweep on!—the lingering wretch releaſe!—
At length he feels the laſt, the friendly blow;
He lies extended on the bed of peace,
For death is peace to virtue and to wo:
When EMMA ſeeks his couch, and ſmiling cries,
"No more in poverty ſhall EDWARD pine,
"Cold as his ſire thy churliſh brother lies,
"The victim of debauch, and all his wealth is thine."

XXIX.

"Alas," he cried, "my treaſure is in Heaven!—
"Ah! what is wealth to him who gaſps for breath?
"My ſoul now purged from all its earthly leaven,
"Looks back with ſcorn, and ſprings to welcome death!
"Yet, POWER SUPREME, I bleſs thy righteous will,
"That frees my children from the pangs of want!—
—"O EMMA! guard them—keep from every ill,—
"And in their infant minds the ſeeds of virtue plant."

XXX. The

XXX.

The ſcene is cloſed.—And thou, who fain wouldſt ken
The ways of Heaven, the ſacred volume ſee,
" *Gold in the fire is tried, accepted men*
In the ſharp furnace of adverſity."
At EDWARD's fate ſhall mortal man repine?
Lift up the eye of faith! behold on high
The happy pair midſt choirs of angels ſhine,
Bleſt with unchanging love, and never more to die.

11:7:49

THE END.

ERRATUM.

Page 37, line 5—For *For ſoon*, read *Too ſoon*.

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